GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:73
ANSWERED ON:07.02.2017
GM Crops
Simha Shri Prathap

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal for commercial cultivation of Genetically Modified (GM) crops in the country in recent years and if so, the details and the present status thereof;
(b) whether the Government is aware of the potential side effects of GM crops and has established due procedure for assessment of impacts, risks and benefits of such crop varieties and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether concerns have been raised by various stakeholders regarding cultivation and sale of GM crop/food varieties including loss of food biodiversity;
(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
(e) the efforts made by the Government to address the concerns raised by the stakeholders in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 73 TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2017 REGARDING GM CROPS BY SHRI PRATHAP SIMHA.

(a)The Centre for Genetic Manipulation and Crop Plants (CGMCP), University of Delhi South Campus has submitted an application for environmental release of Genetically Engineered (GE) Mustard which has completed health and environmental biosafety assessment studies as per relevant guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prescribed by the Government of India as per Rules for the manufacture, use/import/export and storage of hazardous microorganisms/ genetically engineered organisms or cells 1989 (Rules 1989) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The application submitted by CGMCP for environmental release of GE mustard is under examination by Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

(b) The Government is aware of potential side effects of GE crops and has established due procedures for health and environmental safety assessment of risks and benefits of GE crop varieties. The biosafety assessment of each crop and trait including GE Mustard is carried out on a case-by-case basis according to the relevant guidelines and SOPs prescribed by Government of India.

(c) & (d)Some concerns and apprehensions have been raised by a group of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) on the biosafety assessment of GE Mustard. GEAC provided an opportunity to the stakeholders to share their concerns during the 129th GEAC meeting held on June 20, 2016. A special meeting was convened exclusively for understanding the concerns of stakeholders on July 18, 2016.

(e)Government has made necessary efforts to address the concerns raised by stakeholders. As part of this initiative, GEAC in its 126th meeting held on 04.01.2016 reviewed the application submitted by CGMCP, University of Delhi, South Campus and constituted a Sub-Committee consisting of an inter-disciplinary group of experts from GEAC for a thorough review of the biosafety dossier consisting health and environmental safety studies data submitted by CGMCP on GE Mustard. Accordingly, the Sub-Committee prepared an Assessment of Food and Environmental Safety (AFES) document and submitted to GEAC for its evaluation.

The AFES document prepared by Sub-Committee on GE Mustard was placed on the website of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for a period of 30 days from September 05, 2016 to October 05, 2016 for inviting public comments from stakeholders. Entire dossier consisting of health and environmental safety studies submitted by CGMCP, University of Delhi South Campus was also made available for review by public in MoEF&CC during the consultation period. A total of 759 comments have been received from various stakeholders and 29 people in person have reviewed the dossier.

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